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# THE CATHOLIC LAYMAN

Ḫóip do Dhia aṇ pna hárouib, agur ríóóáan aip an ucalam deagtoil do na dáoinib.

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## WHAT EVERY CHRISTIAN MUST KNOW AND DO.

THAT a little book may be very full of mischief, was never more forcibly illustrated than by the little book whose title we have prefixed to our article. We have here a diamond edition of the Moral Philosophy of the Church of Rome, of which no less than two issues have been lately printed, for wide circulation among the Roman Catholics of Ireland, one of them at the small sum of one penny, at Richardson's (late Coyne's), in Capel-street, and the other of them for the still smaller sum of one halfpenny, at Duffy's, Wellington-quay.\* We venture to say that a greater body of moral poison was never before condensed into the space of five inches by three; and we challenge anybody to extract an equal quantity from the bulkiest quarto in existence. Yet it purports to be the production of the Rev. J. Furniss, Priest of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, one of those holy Redemptorist Fathers whose self-allotted mission was to banish and burn all bad books, including French novels, English works of fiction, and, above all, the Protestant Bible. But then, some of our readers may ask, are we to hold the Roman Catholic Church at large responsible for the teaching of some, perhaps, wild, fanatical, and extravagant priest? Certainly not; unless the constituted authorities of the Church of Rome choose to assume that responsibility to themselves, and endorse with their approbation what the Redemptorist priest has written. But can this be possible? our readers will say. We have only to answer that the concluding words of both editions are the following: "Imprimatur ✕ Paulus Cullen, Archiepiscopus Dublinensis." We therefore deal with this work not as the teaching of the Rev. J. Furniss, but as the authorized teaching of the Church of Rome itself.

The little book bears the captivating title "*What every Christian must know and do*." It contains a compendious directory on the subject of confession, the laws of God and of the Church, the rule of life, good works, sins, and conscience. At present, however, we only intend to notice an exposition of the ten commandments, as they are given in this book. Upon the first commandment, "*I am the Lord thy God, thou shalt have no other God but me*," the reader would be led to suppose that the observance of it consisted merely in not doubting, or disbelieving, or denying the Catholic faith, and in not going to prayers or sermons in Protestant places of worship, in not reading Protestant books or tracts, in the practice of faith, hope, and charity, and the avoidance of superstition, such as resorting to fortune-tellers, attending to dreams, &c.; and of sacrilege and irreverence, such as behaving ill to priests and religious, to crucifixes and religious ceremonies. But in all this there is not an allusion to the main thing which the first commandment prohibited—*idolatry*. "Thou shalt have no other God but me." Is it not strange that upon such a text a sermon should be given on not disbelieving the Roman Catholic faith, and not misbehaving to Roman

Catholic priests, and not one word about not dishonouring God by setting up in his place other gods, or semblance of gods, which the commandment itself is exclusively concerned with? Upon simony there is a curious direction: "It is a mortal sin to buy or sell anything sacred, for example, the relic of a saint, but it is not a sin to *sell the case containing the relic* for its just value, or to sell blessed beads for what they are worth, without the blessing" (p. 10 of Richardson's edition). This reminds us of a clever fellow who used to go through the streets with a bundle of little books in one hand, and a bundle of straws in the other. He cried out that he would not sell his book, and that he could not sell his book, but he would sell his straw, and give away his book. His ingenious device excited the curiosity of small boys and curious servant maids, who eagerly invested their penny in the purchase of the straw, and thus secured the possession of the unpurchasable book. The book, to be sure, on examination, proved to be as worthless as the straw, and the whole concern was condemned as a catchpenny.

The second commandment, "*Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain*," is the subject of some strange commentary. On the subject of oaths we quote the following passage:—"Oaths.—I'o call God, or something sacred, to witness that what you say is the truth, for example, to swear on the book or—By the name of God, or the holy name—By Heaven—on my soul—so help me God; but if you do not know that what you say is an oath, or do not mean to take an oath, then these words are not oaths." (p. 11.) Now, here is a doctrine that saps and undermines the foundations of all civil society. The obligation of an oath, by which a man is bound to speak the truth, when he solemnly calls God to witness what he says, and utters the self-pronounced sentence, "So help me God," as I speak the truth, is the chief security of our property, our lives, and our liberties. Upon the faith of this, the most valuable property is transferred from one party to another—nay, the arraigned prisoner is acquitted or hanged—and yet, according to this teaching, to call God to witness that what you say is the truth—to swear on the book—is an oath, with all its solemn obligations, in the sight of God and men; or it is a farce and a mockery, according as the witness in his own secret mind may intend it to be an oath or not. Here is Christian morality for each of the members of the Church of Rome as will receive it: We doubt not that many who read this will repudiate it, and revolt from it with horror and disgust.

Again, it is not an oath to say "on my life—on my conscience—it is God's truth—God knows it—true as the Gospel," unless you mean these words for an oath; yet it is an oath to swear "on my soul—by Heaven." Why? Because the soul is something sacred, and heaven is something sacred; but our life and *our conscience* are not. (p. 11.) Very different from this is the teaching of God's word. From that we learn that the conscience is God's witness, to accuse and excuse us in our doings: it is God's representative within the heart, even of a heathen man; but we can scarcely wonder, when the conscience is subjected to the violent perversion which such training as this may have accustomed it to, when deenerated and degraded, it should no longer be regarded by a Redemptorist Father as anything sacred. The language of our blessed Saviour has been happily applied to these "fools and blind guides" who say, "whoever shall swear by God's truth, it is nothing; but whoever shall swear by his soul, he is a debtor." Ye fools and blind! for whether is greater, the soul, or God's truth which sanctifieth the soul. Ye say, whoever shall swear by the Gospel, it is nothing; but whoever shall swear by the book, he is guilty. Ye fools and blind! for whether is greater, the book, or the Gospel which sanctifieth the book.

The book, no doubt, says, "It is a mortal sin to take an oath in a lie, and worse in a court of justice," but there can be no taking of an oath at all with any form of words, or with any ceremony, if the party does not mean to take an oath; so that the case *pro can never occur* unless the party wilfully chooses, by a perverse and silly intention, to involve himself in the consequences of a mortal sin, which he can so readily avoid by simply repeating over words in the prescribed form, with all the outward appearance of taking a solemn oath, but in-

wardly intending to do nothing of the kind. If our Roman Catholic countrymen adopted such a doctrine as this, where would be our safety? What confidence could be placed on the testimony of a witness, if he be a Roman Catholic, who received such a code of morality as this? What value would there be in the verdicts of our juries if the jurors were Roman Catholics of this persuasion? What faith would we place in our Roman Catholic judges? And who would venture to assert his rights in a court of justice in which Roman Catholic judges and juries presided?

Yet such is a part, and not the worst part of the moral teaching offered by a Roman Catholic priest, under the express sanction of the Most Rev. Paul Cullen, Vicar Apostolic to the Pope. We have had some recent experience in Ireland of the doings of these Redemptorist Fathers, whose peculiar mission amongst us seemed to be to extirpate bad books, and in the same company the Holy Scriptures; and it is the more necessary to scrutinize the kind of books which they would substitute for them.

Upon the 3rd Commandment, "*Remember thou keep holy the Sabbath day*," we have the following exposition:—"It is a sin to work on Sundays or holidays. It is a mortal sin to work for about two hours or two hours and a half," and then we are informed what is meant by work—that it is servile work. "It is not servile work to write or to teach, or to draw or to sing, or to play music or to travel, and 'if a person does on Sunday what is not servile work, it is not a sin to be paid for it.'" (p. 12, 13.) This places some members of the community in a much more favourable position than the rest. "If a labouring man performs his work for hire, two and a-half hours on Sunday, it is a mortal sin; but if an Italian singing-master spends his entire Sunday teaching for reward a set of idle and foolish young ladies to sing bravuras or frivolous ditties, he commits no such sin, and perhaps no sin at all, and may keep holy the Sabbath day, according to our accommodating Mr. Furniss. What says the Douay Bible, Isaiah 58, 13.—"If thou turn away thy feet from the Sabbath, from doing thy own will on my holy day and call the Sabbath delightful, the holy of the Lord, glorious, and glorify him, while thou dost not thy own ways, and little thou wilt be not found to speak a word, I will feed thee with the inheritance of Jacob, thy father." Now, to our apprehension, singing songs, playing music, and travelling on Sundays are very like doing our own ways and fulfilling our own will, and whether it be servile work or not, it appears to be little in accordance with God's injunction of keeping His Sabbath holy." If this injunction be of any obligation upon Christians at all, it is just as much infringed by indulging in works of frivolous amusement, as in works of servile labour; indeed, we should say more so, because servile work is more akin to works of necessity than works of amusement can be. The pressure of want may induce the labouring man to proceed with his servile work on the Sabbath; though we feel assured that the blessing of the Lord is not upon it, and it will not prosper. The pressure of mere wantonness only can induce the idle to spend his Sabbath in music and dancing, to waste away a weary hour; but we believe he dishonours the Sabbath at the least as much as the over-industrious working man. For the one the Church of Rome has an ample robe of charity to cover his breach of God's law, while for his humbler fellow sufferer there are in reserve the penances and mortifications required to wipe away mortal sin.

So much for the first table of the law, as regards our duty to God; and now we come to the second table, regarding our duty to our neighbour. Upon the 4th Commandment, "*Honour thy father and thy mother*," the Rev. father says—"It is a grievous sin to strike your parent, or in his presence (the italics are not ours, but are in the little book) to put out your tongue at them, or to mock them or the like through spite or contempt, or in their hearing to call them very bad names, such as fools, beasts, drunkards."—p. 14. Here the good father leaves us to understand that it is no dishonour to our parents to mock them in their absence or behind their backs, or to call them opprobrious names when they are not within hearing. This is not Scriptural teaching—it is not Christian doctrine; nay, it is not even common heathen morality. The teaching of Rome or Greece, was

\* We have ascertained that for gratuitous distribution the work may be purchased at Mr. Duffy's at the reduced price of three shillings per hundred, and having ourselves purchased 100 copies, we are in a position to convince any reader who may be sceptical as to the accuracy of our quotations, by furnishing him with a copy.

† The italics are in the original, and are not ours.

never heard the revelation of God's will, would have blushed to write a sentence from which such an inference could, by any possibility, be drawn. The law of the Jews was, "He that curseth his father or mother dying let him die, he hath cursed his father and mother, let his blood be upon him."—Lev. xx. 9. Death was the punishment of a child who cursed his father or mother, whether present or absent. "He that striketh his father or mother shall be put to death."—Exodus xxi. 15. The little book says it is a *grievous* sin, whereas it is a mortal sin to talk during mass or to get drunk.

Next we come to the 5th Commandment—"Thou shalt not kill." Murder, or the unjustly taking away another's life, is a grievous mortal sin. This is all very good; but a foot note tells us "it is not a sin to desire some temporal misfortune to another, because it will make him *cease to give scandal, or be converted, or not persecute the good.*"—p. 16. That is, if a Roman Catholic, convinced of what he conceives to be error, should begin to avow his change of feeling, and thereby give scandal to the Church, it is no possible harm to wish him a smart attack of paralysis, or a gentle breaking of his neck, or other temporal misfortune, because it makes him cease to give scandal. Though it may do his body some harm, it will do his soul some good. The Holy Inquisition believed this doctrine as sincerely as does the Redemptorist Father; and if it has developed its principles into practice more extensively than the Redemptorist Father, the reader may depend upon it it is solely because the constitutions of Italy and Spain are more agreeable to mutilation and murder, that scandal may be hushed, than the free constitution of the Anglo-Saxon. They may burn our Bibles, but they cannot burn our bodies. But the fell spirit of the Inquisition—the spirit that lit the fires of Smithfield, and still feeds the dungeons of Tuscany and Rome with their victims—that spirit of religious persecution is disclosed unmistakably in those few but pregnant words—"It is no sin to desire some temporal misfortune to another, because it will make him cease to give scandal or be converted."

Upon the 6th Commandment—"Thou shalt not commit adultery"—there are many things to which we should make grave exception. This portion of the book is full of gross and indecent suggestions, of impure and abominable ideas respecting the nearest and most sacred relations of life, from childhood to manhood. The very nature of the subject compels us to pass them over in silent reprobation.

We can more freely examine the exposition of the 7th Commandment—"Thou shalt not steal." Upon this very plain and simple text the rev. father revels in the luxury of casuistical refinement and subtlety. He says there are different ways of stealing:—1. To steal all at once. 2. To take and keep things by little and little. 3. To help others to steal, and so on. Then, as to the sin which attaches to the different kinds of stealing as distinguished by him, he says, "It is a venial sin to steal a little. It is a mortal sin to steal much; for example, to steal from a workman a day's wages, or to steal less from a poorer man, or more from a richer man."—p. 20. Now, reader, are not these most ingenious and most unsatisfactory distinctions from an infallible authority? If you steal 4s. 6d. from a carpenter, being his day's wages, that's a mortal sin; but if you steal the same sum from his employer, the builder, it is transformed into a venial sin, and requires to be repeated three times, at least, to reach the size and magnitude of a mortal sin in his behalf. The common law of England had once a distinction between grand and petit larceny. It was a petit larceny if the sum stolen was under twelve pence, and a grand larceny if it exceeded the little shilling. The plain sense of modern times would not endure such preposterous distinctions, which measured crime by the amount of its success, and not by the spirit which actuates its perpetration. But this is not the worst of it. The Rev. Mr. Furniss tells us, "If you steal from different persons, it needs *half as much again for a mortal sin*; and the same if you steal at different times. If you steal from different persons, as well as at different times, it needs *double the sum*. If you steal often a little, when the little sums come to make altogether a large sum, then it becomes a mortal sin. It is also a mortal sin to steal a little, if at the same time you have the will and intention to steal much, if you could."—p. 20.

Can any honest man read this with patience? If we dared to measure these matters by degrees, by a *sin-measure*, who can believe that it is a greater sin once and for ever, under strong overpowering temptation, to appropriate, or, in plain English, to steal a round sum of say £100 on a single occasion, than to draw the same sum from a till stealthily, but continuously, with fixed and steadfast purpose, day after day, for a hundred days, by sums of 20s. each day. The criminality of each individual act is the same before God—the motive is the same, and the breach of trust by which it is accomplished the same; and does not the deliberate systematic repetition of the act one hundred times, until it becomes a habit of the mind and an established principle of action, aggravate the guilt a thousand fold? Not so, says the infallible Church, teaching morality as Christians—which would be indignantly repudiated by the most reputable members of the most respectable order. For may repeat the act of theft 100 times, at the rate

of £1 per day, before it becomes equivalent in guilt to the single act of stealing £100 all at once. By a still more complex feat of Romish arithmetic it is declared that if, instead of always plundering the same individual, the dexterous thief distributes his attentions among several, he may practise his art to a much wider limit before he incurs the mortal sin. He may plunder 199 persons of one pound each before he incurs the same guilt as if he robbed one person of £100. What apprentice or clerk in a grocer's shop, desiring to appropriate as much of his master's property as he could safely manage, would do otherwise than adopt Mr. Furniss's plan of taking little by little, and thereby keeping his poor soul safe from mortal sin. Now, what is the secret spring of all this kind of theology? The confessional and the sale of indulgences are vastly prejudiced by big sins done *in globo*; that is done all at once. There is at best but one confession of them, and most probably none at all, as the risk of detection seals the lips; but let the thief subdivide his crime into many small acts, constantly repeated, no matter how it sears his conscience till it has lost all sense of sin and of honesty, it is more venial in the sight of the Church of Rome than one bold act of crime which endangered her privilege of remission? Would not the following be a curious thesis for the class of dogmatic theology at Maynooth to discuss. Assuming that an adult person may be killed by a single grain of strichnine administered in one dose, and that the act of administering it amounts to a mortal sin: how often may it be administered "little by little," in portions of 1-10th of a grain to the same patient, before it amounts to a mortal sin? And again—to how many different patients may the same quantity be administered at different times before the mortal sin is fully consummated. Does not such monstrous jargon about venial and mortal sins sicken the heart of an honest man? Could it have even entered into the imagination to conceive such a distinction, unless a man had a pecuniary interest in the remission of sins, and, therefore, was obliged to set a mercantile value upon their enormity?

Another specimen of the kind of honesty inculcated, we read as follows, p. 21:—"When materials are given for some work; for example—cloth to tailors, it is a sin to keep pieces which remain, except people are quite sure that it is not against the will of the employer, or there is a common custom of doing it, or it is necessary in order to gain reasonable profit! [No wonder that Roman Catholic tailors and dress-makers would indulge in the game of cribbage.] It is a sin to mix something with what you sell—for example, water with any liquor, except there is a common custom of doing it, and it is necessary in order to gain a reasonable profit. [No wonder our beer is mixed with water, our milk with chalk, our butter with flour, our gold chains with brass, our very medicines with vile and noxious stuffs.] Again, to forge or imitate a person's writing, if you do any harm with it, is a sin—p. 21. The converse of this proposition is left to the fancy. To forge or imitate a person's writing, if you do some good with it, is not a sin. If, suppose, a forged document purports to come from a parent, commanding obedience to something which the Church desires to have done—to take the veil of a nun—the vow of poverty and celibacy—to transfer property, or the like—it is, after all, but a pious fraud, and does some good, or, at least, is intended to do good. All this is necessarily right. How can fair discussion in matters of controversy be carried on with adversaries who hold such doctrines? If it be permitted to forge or imitate a person's handwriting, it can be little harm to alter a passage in St. Augustine or St. Jerome, so as to fit an argument and discomfit a troublesome opponent. The chances are, if he be not very sharp he never may look to the original, and the fraud will pass undiscovered, and the good! cause will be served. Here is the source of many a fraud and fabrication exposed in the pages of the CATHOLIC LAYMAN, and hence it is that, expose and confute them as often as we may, they spring up afresh in perennial streams of untailing abundance.

Having said so much of stealing, let us see how the duty of restitution is handled. "If you have stolen anything you must give it back; if you have injured any one in his person, character, honour, or goods, you must make amends." Very good, so far.—"You may delay restitution if you cannot do it at present, without very great difficulty; for example, if a workman would have to sell his tools, or if a person would lose his character—but you must have the will and intention to do it as soon as possible, at least by little and little."—p. 22.

So, when a man has robbed his fellow of his property, and consults the Church of Rome as to his duty of restitution, he is told to consult his own convenience first, and not the circumstances of the injured man, or the imperative demands of justice. He is not, at once, promptly and at any cost and any inconvenience to restore what he has stolen to his victim, who may be driven to the last extremity of want by its deprivation. The workman is not to sell his tools, much less his coat, to do instant justice, when the moment of compunction for his fault has arrived, as this would place him in some difficulty, and he may take his time and give it back little by little, as suits his convenience. Still more abominable is the case of a man who has injured the character of his neighbour by some wicked, calumny, or blighted the honour and fair fame of a woman by some unfounded slander. What is his plain duty? Honestly and openly to confess his fault, and thereby make the only repara-

tion in his power. This he cannot do without in some degree compromising his own character. What matter for that! whose fault is it? Go at once and make instant and ample reparation, and clear the slandered character, wipe away the aspersion which cannot rest for a moment upon a woman's honour without diminishing its lustre. No, no, says the cold-blooded disciple of Liguiri, you are not required to compromise your own character at all. Let injured innocence remain under the damning imputation of your vile slander; let your victim sink steadily into an infamous grave, while you recal your slander by little and little—by gentle hints and slight insinuations, by saying, "Well, perhaps, I was too censorious; perhaps I took an uncharitable, a hasty view of her conduct." This is no supposition of ours. Hear Mr. Furniss himself:—"If you injure much or take away any one's character by a lie, it is a mortal sin, and you must recal the lie. You might say you were mistaken or the like."—p. 23.

After this—our readers will not be taken by surprise at anything to be found in this little book on the subject of lies. It says, "Lies are always sins; but it is not a lie for a servant to say that her master is not at home, meaning that he cannot be seen, because every one understands this. Lies which do great harm are mortal sins."—p. 22. Where else but in a code of morality such as this will one find the test of a lie to consist in its consequences, instead of its intention to deceive. Whether the servant does deceive the visitor or not, is not the test of its being a lie; it is whether it was uttered with the intention of deceiving. What is a lie? The breach of the moral and religious obligation under which we are bound to speak the truth. What is truth? The correspondence between the utterance of the tongue and the sentiment of the heart; the faithful conformity of our language, or of our conduct, to the sentiment of the mind we declare. The devil is called the father of lies, and the first lie recorded in Scripture was uttered by him. Mr. Furniss, adopting the language of his Church, says that lies which do great harm are mortal sins; and, of course, lies which do little harm are not mortal sins. What says the Douay Bible, Apoc. xxi. v. 8, "All liars shall have their portion in the pool burning with fire and brimstone." Again, "Telling a secret is wrong, and is very bad if it is a great secret, and telling it does great harm, or gives great sorrow. It would not be wrong to tell it to some one for a good reason, such as to ask advice." (p. 23.) Therefore, of course, it is always right to tell every secret to the priest, and he must be the depository of a great many things told under the seal of the strictest confidence and assurance that the confidant would be silent as the grave. What sense of security can there exist in the presence of such morality as this? Again, "To read letters or private papers is wrong, and would be very bad if you think, perhaps, there is something in them the owner would be very sorry for you to know." (p. 24.) This, which is very wrong, and something worse in the estimation of every honourable mind, becomes very right, provided the inquisitive delinquent plunges into the midst of the perusal of the forbidden letter without thinking anything at all of what the owner would feel if he saw his privacy invaded, and his inmost secrets reft from him!

Here we must close, and ask each of our readers is the teaching of this book in accordance with his notions of "what every Christian should do? Is there any master who would employ a servant; any labourer who would associate with his neighbour, if he practised what a Redemptorist Father has preached? The teaching of this little book—small in size, but big in mischief—is to be substituted for the teaching of the Bible. Can we, then, wonder that in order to accomplish this monstrous substitution, it is found necessary to banish and to burn a book which condemns every line of their teaching, and convicts them of falsehood and dishonesty to the souls of their deluded followers. In regard to the passages we have noticed it is not necessary to cite Scripture to condemn them. We appeal to the honest sentiments of our readers' own minds—to the native impulses of their hearts—to the sober judgments of their plain understandings—to condemn such teaching as not merely unchristian, but immoral and abominable.

#### THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS.

"This is eternal life," said our blessed Lord, "that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." This life-giving knowledge of God is something more than a mere apprehension of His being and attributes by the understanding. It denotes a personal, practical acquaintance with Him in our souls, which is to be carried on from day to day, and deepened and consolidated by obedience to His revealed will. Yet this intellectual perception of Him is preliminary to, and forms an important part in, that higher, deeper, and holier knowledge which our Lord denominates eternal life. To know God requires that we have just notions of His character and our relations to Him. We cannot be said to know Him while we entertain erroneous ideas on these points. Accordingly, the design of revealed religion is to enlighten us in this respect, and to set before us these all-important matters in a clear, simple, and intelligible form. To the holy Scriptures, therefore, which are the revelation of God's will, we must